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PARTY ACTIVITIES

An Abalkin report from Novosibirsk (20 May) speaks of the "unhealthy attitude" (nezdorovoye otnoshenie) towards criticism on the part of the oblast Party Committee which considers any adverse criticism as "an unfair and tendentious assessment" (nespravedlivaya, tendentsioznaya otsenka) of its activities. The fear of criticism from any quarters has, in fact, reached a point at which officials avoid criticizing each other on general principles. This state of affairs is said to reflect particularly on the oblast Writers Union which is under the "direct guidance" of the Party Committee. "Unprincipled cliquing and amicable relations" (bezprintsipnaya gruppov-shchina i priatel'skie otnosheniya) is an evil to be avoided at all costs. Squabbling (skloka), on the other hand, is no less harmful to Party and State activities; it is unworthy of Bolshevik leadership. In either case, says the report, it is impossible to obtain positive results.

The suppression of criticism, says STAVROPOLSKAYA PRAVDA editorially on 22 May, is un-Bolshevik, and the practice itself must be suppressed without delay. Evidence of a "morbid attitude" (boleznennoye otnoshenie) towards criticism is cited in the case of the Piatigorsk Town Party Committee whose Secretary is in the habit of "swearing rudely" (grubo rugatsya) at his Communist critics and even threatening them with severe punishment. For such behavior, the paper says, the secretary "deserves to be removed from his post", but the Party Committee nevertheless left him alone after he had "admitted his mistakes and promised to reform." Another case was the Vodorazdelny Machine-tractor Station. When an article appeared in the press criticizing the shortcomings of the station's Party organization, the latter simply prevented the workers from learning about it.

Leaders can still be found who impede the development of criticism from below, from the masses, who do not listen to the voice of the Communists and non-Party workers, who even persecute those who justly point to shortcomings. People who hush up criticism...are backward people. They cause incalculable harm to the task.

Evidence of suppression of criticism, the editorial asserts, has also been noted in Kursavsky, Novoselitsky, and Apolonskiy rayons which are "seriously warned" against that malpractice in the future.

Some Party leaders, according to MOLOT (30 May), disdain contact with the masses, ignore critical comment and sometimes even "muzzle" all criticism. Instances of flagrant violation of freedom of criticism from below are said to be too many to list. The Communist director of the consumer goods combine, for example, flew into a rage when the quality of his combine's products was "justly criticized". He even "organized a trial" of the critic. Primary Party organizations are usually bypassed by the rayon Party committees when they should not be, and rank-and-file members are seldom consulted on anything. This is said to be reflected in the apathetic attitude of the membership to some of their leaders. "Rank-and-file Communists hardly attend Party meetings." No names of particular localities or Party Committees are given but the tenor of the editorial suggests that Rostov Oblast as a whole is the object of its criticism.

The supercilious attitude of the oblast Party Committees toward their rayon committees and the latter's disregard for the primary Committees are strongly criticized by PRAVDA on 25 May. "Rubber stamping, government red tape and a formal attitude" (shtamp, kazenshchina i formalnoye otnoshenie) are distasteful to Party leadership, says the paper, but these are the peculiarities characterizing the work of the Minsk Oblast Party. Its contact with the lower Party echelons is usually confined to writing memoranda, notes, and draft resolutions. This type of work, however, invariably remains on paper as the oblast officials never bother to visit the committees under their jurisdiction or offer them any tangible assistance. A similar situation is said to obtain in Chita Oblast where the "declarative conference method" (deklarativno-zasedatel'skiy metod) of work is employed to cover a multitude of shortcomings. The lower Party cadres (nizovye partiynye kadry) must get personal instruction on their political activities, the paper argues, for otherwise no Party decision will ever be materialized.

A check up on performance can be effective only when carried out on the actual spot, not from the office...

Russian version:

Proverka ispolnenia mozhet byt' effektivnoy lish v tom sluchaye, esli ona osuschestvlyayetsia ne v kantseliarii a neposredstvenno na meste...

In an article carried by PRAVDA on 26 May (not broadcast), the head of the Vladimir Oblast Party admits that the training and education of young Communist cadres is something to be concerned about. These fledgling Communists are placed in various Party jobs regardless of their abilities or theoretical training, and the result is "a great fluidity of cadres" (bolshaya tekuchest kadrov), particularly among primary Party secretaries. The young Communists, the author continues, must be trained and educated before they are placed in suitable positions. The practice of shifting them from one job to another because of inadequate performance is "harmful" to the Party and conducive to confusion within its ranks. Even the best Party workers it is claimed, "can fade away and become useless" (mogut zakhiret i okazat'sia neprigodnymi) if their political growth is stunted and they are not encouraged to broaden their outlook (krugozor). The author is also scornful of the practice "in a number of places" of keeping women out of executive positions but he does not pursue the subject beyond that statement. Reference is also made to the suppression of criticism and the "family circle atmosphere and mutual patronage" (obstanovka semeystvennosti i krugovoy poruki) in certain unnamed Party committees which should be eradicated by the oblast committee once and for all.

In a dispatch from Kiev carried by PRAVDA on 29 May (not broadcast), Chernichenko tells of a new device employed by individual Communists to keep out of Party work. The primary Party organizations attached to the city House Committees (domoupravleniya) are in charge of the political enlightenment of the population within their respective areas. A spot check in some of those organizations, the report says, has revealed that many of them "have become havens for loafers and false people with Party cards" (stali ubezhishchem dlya bezdelnikov, falshivyykh lyudey s partiynym biletom). Indeed many Communists appear to prefer anything to Party activities. The reason for that, however, is not discussed.

Many House Committee Party organizations are doing anything they please except intra-Party and political work. They replace the house managers and do petty administrative jobs for them.

Russian version:

Mnogie domoupravlencheskie partiynye organizatsii zanimayutsia vsem, chem ugodno, tolko ne voprosami vnutripartiynoy i politicheskoy raboty. Oni podmenyayut upravlyayushchikh domami, vypolnyayut za nikh melkie khozaystvennye dela.

Chernichenko cites a few cases to show how the racket works. Some Communists, when transferred to other jobs, register their Party cards with the House Committee organization rather than at the place of employment. Since Party membership involves a great deal of extra-curricular work, after office hours, these Communists find it much easier to avoid it in the House Committees where supervision is less rigid, and where the "family atmosphere" discourages criticism and self-criticism among the members. The same applies to candidates for Party membership: they find it easier to enter the Party ranks through the House Committee organizations rather than at the place of employment where the waiting period is too long and promotion is often delayed. The young Party candidate Astashkevich is given as a typical example. Having received her law degree and candidate's ticket in Tashkent during the war, she managed to wiggle out of her postwar Government assignment and make her way to Kiev instead. After a short period of "work" at a House Committee Party organization

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she found three obliging Party members to testify that they had known her for a long time and to recommend her for admission to full Party membership. All this, the report concludes, was arranged easily within the Committee's "family circle", and, what is more, Party membership was granted without further investigation.

SOVETSKAYA BELORUSSIA (30 May) discusses the familiar wide gap between Party decisions and their implementation which, it says, "has not been narrowed" in many of the oblast committees. Party Committees, says the editorial, often pass up the primary organizations in their contact with the masses, and the result is that these organizations "are drifting into administering their own Party life." Many a Party committee is said to look upon a meeting or conference as an end in itself, and the decisions adopted are therefore forgotten "as soon as they are put down in the minutes." This attitude is said to prevail in many of the Republic's Party Committees but Gorodokskiy Rayon, Vitebsk Oblast, is mentioned as the worst of them all, including the Gomel Town Party which is also "derelict in its duties."

Lack of "coordination" between the rayon and primary Party committees is also charged by KAZAKHSTANSKAYA PRAVDA on 31 May. The paper cautions certain rayon committees of Kustanai Oblast against by-passing the primary Party organizations which are the "mainstay" of the Party and its chief link with the masses, but does not pursue the point.

AGRICULTURE

More Statute Violations Noted: SOVETSKOYE ZAKARPATYE (23 May) discusses agricultural charter violations in general terms, and hints that the evil still persists: "Not everything has been done" to eliminate it. Unspecified violations are said to be taking place in Uzhgorod and Berégovskiy okrugs, and the kolkhoz workers are urged to guard kolkhoz property "like the apple of their eye." A harder struggle against agricultural statute violations is urged by RADYANSKA DONETSHCHINA (28 May). The paper admits that "statute violations in our oblast are still being committed", and calls upon the prosecuting organs to do their share in catching and punishing the violators. The specific instances of violation are not listed.

ZARYA VOSTOKA devotes three editorials to the subject of charter violation (25 and 28 May and 1 June). The paper points out that despite the measures taken by the Georgian Party to stamp out such violations, the fight against them is by no means over. Plundering and squandering of kolkhoz property and "other acute violations of the charter", it is claimed, is still going on in many rayons of the Republic.

Recently the Party organizations of Georgia destroyed and liquidated many violations of the kolkhoz artel statute. Lands grabbed from the artels have been returned to the kolkhozes together with the property. Indebtedness has been lowered.

One of the serious shortcomings in the administration of the Republic's agriculture is said to be the "oblivion" (zabvenie) into which many of the Party and Soviet organizations have sunk. Reiterating the Party's injunction to safeguard communal lands, livestock, and other properties "from any manifestation of arbitrariness and iniquity," the editorial (25 May) demands an end to the "criminal attitude" towards collective farm property and calls for the "severe punishment" of the guilty.

Returning to the subject on 28 May, the same paper reveals that on 26 May the Central Committee of the Georgian Communist Party held a special session to discuss "measures against pilfering of communal wealth". (It is worth recalling, in this connection, that measures to fight against kolkhoz statute violation had also been outlined and urged by the Party conference at Tbilisi early last April, and again at 19th Georgian Komsomol Congress on 17 May. The principal speaker at those gatherings as well as at the recent special session was Mgeladze, first secretary of Republic's Central Party Committee.) Mentioned for the first time, in addition to the familiar terms of embezzlement, pilfering, squandering and others, is the word "extortion" (vymogatelstvo) which is implicitly referred to as one of the worst features of

charter violation. The last of the three editorials (1 June) treats the topic along the same lines. It adds, however, that since the question of statute violations has already been solved at the higher Party levels, it now devolves upon the respective local Party organizations to put those decisions into effect: "Now everything depends on the level of organizational and political work of the local Party organizations..."

Cultivation And Crop Maintenance Must Be Improved: The oblast agricultural workers and machine-tractor stations, says KIROVOGRADSKA PRAVDA (24 May), have all the technical equipment and manpower necessary to insure a rich harvest, but lack of proper organization and coordination accounts for their poor performance at present. Crop maintenance is said to be "very bad" in Elizavetgrad, Dolinskiy, Petrovskiy, Tishkovskiy, Novogrodkovskiy and a number of other rayons. Inter-row cultivation of corn and root fodder crops has just begun whereas it should have been started long ago, and the cultivation of sunflower, sugar beets, and forest belts is already behind schedule. STAVROPOLSKAYA PRAVDA (28 May) declares that the neglected weeds in a number of rayons "are already stifling the crops and seriously threatening the harvest", insufficient attention being paid to that phase of field work. The situation is "particularly serious" in the farms of Voroshilovskiy, Vorontsovo-Alexandrovskiy, and Soldato-Alexandrovskiy rayons. The horse-drawn cultivators are not used at all, and the distribution of kolkhozniks among the crop-tending sectors is poorly organized in the mentioned rayons. If the officials of the machine-tractor stations "had paid closer attention to what is actually going on", the paper concludes, the situation would have been much different now.

MOLOT (29 May) complains of the "harmful complacency" (vrednoye blagodushie) observable among the oblast agricultural authorities. According to a previous decision, a considerable area of the oblast crops was to be weeded with chemicals sprayed from airplanes, but the time set for that job "has been allowed to lapse." In some rayons, especially in Voloshinsky, there is virtually no weeding of crops done despite the fact that "the weeds are strangling the crops." Only one-tenth of the oblast's cotton area has been cultivated so far, and the work is still proceeding "inadmissibly slowly." The paper also complains of the indifference shown to the recently-planted protective forest belts which require a certain "acclimatization". Sporadic care of those trees, it is intimated, will result in the loss of many of them. Some of the rayons have not even bothered to select the proper forest brigades for the purpose. Among the areas where forest-cultivation work is said to be long overdue are Romanovka, Konstantinovskiy, Remontnoye, Sulina, Samarskiy, Stepnovskiy, Yegorlykskiy, Novocherkassk, and "several other" rayons.

An "irresponsible attitude" toward the cultivation and maintenance of protective forest belts is charged in a summarized report from Vinnitsa of 30 May. A spot check initiated by VINNITSKA PRAVDA is reported to have revealed gross negligence in the matter of forest care on the part of many Party, soviet, and agricultural officials and heads of machine-tractor stations. In Shargorodskiy Rayon, for example, the 1949 and 1950 plantations have never been touched, and "are now overgrown with weeds." The forest belts in Dashevskiy Rayon have already been "seriously impaired", and at least four machine-tractor stations have not started any cultivation although the time limit for this expired on 5 May. The report says also that spot checks have been ordered of all the oblast forest belts and that the press has been directed to allot prominent space to the findings and to the general progress made in that branch of agriculture.

A letter to Stalin from the collective farmers of Turkmenia pledging a bumper cotton crop in 1952 admits "with Bolshevik straightforwardness" that the 1951 harvest was below expectations:

Many farms, particularly in Tashlak Oblast, as a result of gross violations of agrotechnology and serious shortcomings in labor organization, last year gathered a poor cotton harvest and remained indebted to the State.

Cotton is also the object of KRYMSKAYA PRAVDA's editorial discussion of 27 May. The simple truth is that the collective farms and machine-tractor stations of the oblast "are lagging behind", the editorial says. The cotton plantations are not properly maintained and inter-row cultivation is "very poor." This is said to apply to the entire oblast, but in Dzhanikoy, Oktyabrskoye, Azov, and Leninskoye rayons the situation is "frankly alarming".

Following are some of the other agricultural items, in chronological order revealing varying degrees of agricultural shortcomings:

21 May -- Irresponsibility has led to the failure of agricultural organs of Nikolayev, Zaporozhye, and Dnepropetrovsk Oblasts to insure supplies of poisonous chemicals. Consequently, the sainfoin weevil (espartsetoviy dovgonosyk) considerably damaged the beet-root fodder crops. Some areas must be immediately resown. The machine-tractor stations of Poltava, Kirovograd, Odessa, Vinnitsa, and Sumy Oblasts have fulfilled the harvester repair plan by only 15% to 20%. (RADIANSKA UKRAINA)

21 May -- The mistakes and shortcomings allowed last year are in danger of being repeated now. In Arzgirskiy, Ipatovskiy, Lenokumskiy, Molotov, and Petrovskiy Rayons, the late start in sheep-shearing has led to a lowering of the quality of wool and even to losses. (STAVROPOLSKAYA PRAVDA)

22 May -- On the whole, however, the progress of potato planting cannot be said to be satisfactory...it is important to pay particular attention to the sowing quotas...not less than 45,000 potato plants on every hectare. (ZARYA VOSTOKA)

23 May -- The flax flea (lryanaya bloshka) is a great threat to flax at the present moment... in spite of the presence of the flax pest, a careless attitude is displayed, and no measures are taken to preserve the plants. (RABOCHY PUT editorial).

28 May -- Owing to the idleness of machinery, the sheep-shearing and wool-delivery schedules are being violated. (STAVROPOLSKAYA PRAVDA)

29 May -- There are many kolkhozes in which the rate of livestock development lags behind other branches of agricultural husbandry and is much lower than the standard set by the demands of the country. (DNEPROPETROVSKAYA PRAVDA)

30 May -- There are many agricultural administrations and directors of machine-tractor stations in Alma-Ata and Taldy-Kurgan oblasts who have failed to utilize their electrical shearing equipment to the full. Many of them have underfulfilled their plans and have miscalculated the volume of work... (KAZAKHSTANSKAYA PRAVDA).

Fishing Industry Still Lagging Behind: A letter to Stalin from all the workers of the Khabarovsk Krai fishing industry (27 May) presents a long and detailed list of specific pledges in connection with greater achievements in 1952. The present sorry plight of the industry, which probably prompted the letter in the first place, is revealed in passing and in context of recent creditable achievements:

...there is still a large number of enterprises and fishing collectives which failed to complete the 1951 fishing plan, condoned mismanagement, large overhead expenditures, and losses, deteriorating quality and growing production costs and failed to put their operations on a self-sustaining basis.

Russian version:

...yest eshche tseliy ryad predpriyatiy i kolkhozov, kotorie ne vypolnili plana dobychi ryby v 1951 godu, dopustili bezkhozaystvennost, bolshie neproizvoditelnie raskhody i poteri, snizhenie soruchnosti i udorozhanie sebestoimosti ryboproduktsii, ne dobilis rentabelnoy raboty.

The Crimean fishing industry, KRYMSKAYA PRAVDA states editorially on 30 May, is working "extremely unsatisfactorily," and the somewhat higher fishing tempo in May is "insufficient to liquidate the gap" left after the first quarter of the year. The paper discloses that the fishing plan for the first quarter was completed by only 11.7%, and the April output was 69.5% of planned figures. This "serious backwardness", the editorial concludes, must be liquidated without further delay as the whole oblast fishing plan is threatened with failure.

MISCELLANEOUS

From a broadcast for children entitled "Malaya" (21 May):

"...British soldiers are being taken to Malaya...so that everyone who has risen to fight for independence and happiness should be put to death."

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"Stern punishment awaits everyone showing sympathy for the fighters or pronouncing the word 'freedom'."

"The Malays have risen for a decisive battle; they find happiness in their proud fight..."